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Reading a Columnist's Mail

Question About U.S.-Cuban Affairs

Dear Sir: In a letter published May 23 Richard G. Harvey objected to Sidney Bell's interpretation of Cuban history. Mr. Harvey pointed out many achievements in Cuba that were made possible by American capital, and made this statement defending the American interventions in Cuba throughout the past 60 years: "I think it could be said that Cuba has chosen poor quality government every time it had a choice since 1898. The country is quite obviously not yet prepared for successful popular government, and the Castro tyranny is certainly no move toward improvement in this respect."

Mr. Harvey's opinion on the political maturity of the Cuban people might be a proper one but I have a question that needs an answer. Who is the final authority to which the Cuban people should bring their political plans?

Final Authority

I would think that the final authority is the Cuban people and they apparently approve of Fidel Castro, as shown by the noticeable, and embarrassing lack of support given to the invasion of April 17. Perhaps they were held under military supervision, or perhaps they discovered that the CIA was in charge. Whatever the reason, the invaders were stranded on the beaches, tripping over their American weapons. Mr. Harvey may think that the authority for bringing "proper" governments lies in the United States.

And it is true that the United States has been the supreme authority in determining the governments of the American states. This seat of authority was not voted to the United States in a democratic election held during the era of Theodore Roosevelt; it was acquired through the coercion of

this was Mr. Bell's point. He didn't deny the abuses of Castro, they existed in Cuba before Castro gained power. He didn't deny that the United States had extended aid to Cuba, but he did point out the abuses that the Cuban people had suffered at the hands of the United States.

If I lived in a country whose economy was controlled by a foreign capitalistic power that invaded my homeland when it saw fit, I would not have a favorable view of capitalism either. Free enterprise is wonderful for the countries using the natural resources and population, but I fail to see the advantages of capitalism to the people who cannot choose their own government without fear of armed intervention by a foreign power, whether it be capitalistic or communistic. The Cuban people are entitled to choose a government in a democratic method and that government should be free from foreign influence by any other democratic country, or communistic country, or socialistic country. The people of a country should determine their government without fear of outside interference.

—JAMES BITTNER
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(A student who studies under Mr. Sidney Bell)

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